1:Seligmann & Seligmann I-8 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5



of the purer Veddas in order that the reader may appreciate the bearing of what will be said in other parts of the book concerning the different groups of Veddas we visited.

The general appearance of the Veddas will be most readily appreciated by examining the photographs of pure, or nearly pure-blooded Veddas reproduced in Plates II and III. The first of these represents four men of Danigala and a half-breed boy. The oldest man is Kaira (1), the "patriarch" or senior of the Danigala group[1]. Of the three other men, his sons, the two in the foreground are Randu Wanniya (2), nearest to the pole supporting the hut, and Tuta (3). Plate III is a group of Henebedda Veddas, the relatively tall man with his hands hanging by his sides is the half-breed Appuhami (4), and the taller of the two men with axes over their shoulders, the Henebedda shaman[2], is also a half-breed. The man to the right of the shaman with bow and arrows in his hands is Kaira (5), the youth in front of him is Poromala (6), on whose left hand Tuta (7) kneels by the side of Kalua who is in the same position. The four men between Appuhami and the shaman all appear to be fairly typical Veddas; the man next to Appuhami is Poromala of Bingoda, upon whose right stand Handuna (8) and Randu Wanniya (9).

In stature the Veddas are short: the Sarasins measured 24 men of the "Central Vedda district" whom they considered pure-blooded and obtained an average of 1·553 mm. (60¾ inches) with a minimum of 1·460 mm. (57½ inches) and a maximum of 1·600 mm. (63 inches). There was only one man of 1·600 mm. and 20 of the 24 men measured were below 1·575 mm. (62 inches). Eleven Vedda women of the same district gave an average

[1] Two larger photographs of this man as he appeared some 15 years ago are given by the Sarasins (Plate VII, figure 10), who consider him a "tolerably pure-blooded Vedda." The numbers in brackets refer to the genealogy on p. 60.

[2] Shaman is the title which the Tungus give to their "spirit-conjurors." In *Hekura Jahuu* (1903) it is said that the terms shaman and shamanism "are applied in modern times to superstitions of the kind that connects itself with exorcism and 'devil-dancing' as their most prominent characteristic.....The characteristic of shamanism is the existence of certain soothsayers or medicine-men, who profess a special art of dealing with the mischievous spirits who are supposed to produce illness and other calamities, and who invoke these spirits and ascertain the means of appeasing them in trances produced by fantastic ceremonies and convulsive dancings."

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-S (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5



height of 1·433 mm. (56½ inches) with a minimum of 1·355 mm. (53⅜ inches) and a maximum of 1·500 mm. (59 inches). The median of the men was 1·545 mm. (60¾ inches), that of the women 1·435 mm. (56½ inches). Although Veddas do not become unduly fat they have, when well nourished, sturdy rather than slight figures, and a few of the older men may present rather prominent abdomens. The hair is wavy, sometimes almost curly, and in old age not rarely turns white. There is little hair upon the bodies of the purer Veddas and the growth of hair upon the face can best be described as slight or moderate, usually consisting of a rather thin moustache and sparse goatee beard.

The skin of the Veddas varies enormously, that of the face being generally somewhat lighter than that of the skin of the chest. But apart from these minor variations, the skin colour of any series of individuals will be found to vary from a deep brown-black, through various shades of bronze, in some of which a definite reddish tone can be detected, to a colour which can only be called yellowish-brown. A medium brown-black is perhaps the commonest, but apart from the darkest brown-black every colour, even the lightest, occurs in individuals whose general appearance suggests that they are pure-, or almost pure-blooded Veddas, and we have no doubt that the bronze shades occur quite as often among pure-blooded Veddas as among the less pure. Indeed our experience suggests that the occurrence of a skin colour of the darker shades of brown-black may be taken as evidence of miscegenation. The eyes are always dark brown. The head is long and narrow, the Sarasins give the average cephalic index of 17 male skulls as 70·5 (minimum 64·9 and maximum 75·9, median 71). The length-height index of the same skulls is 73 (minimum 65·4, maximum 79, median 73·4). Generally the face is long rather than broad, but in this respect there is considerable variation. Twelve skulls gave an average facial index of 88·2 (minimum 77·2, maximum 99·2, median 88·5), but ten of the skulls were over 85, the two lowest both giving an index of about 77.

The brow ridges are well marked so that the eyes appear deeply set or even sunken. The chin is somewhat pointed and



2 [canda, should be mi; see p. xx. - Ana'lyst]

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5



is rarely prominent. The lips, though well developed, are not tumid (except sometimes in the young); sometimes the mouth is rather flat. This when accompanied by moderately prominent cheek bones gives some faces an expression of considerable energy. The jaw is not prognathous, the nostrils are moderately broad, the root of the nose is depressed but never flattened to any considerable degree. The average of the nasal indices of 17 skulls gave the figure 52·7 (minimum 43·3, maximum 62·2, median 52·3), which is just short of the index (53) at which platyrrhiny is commonly assumed to begin. Nevertheless we believe that the Veddas may more fairly be classed as mesorrhine than platyrrhine, for certainly the impression made on us by the living was that they were not specially broad-nosed. The capacity of the 18 male skulls described by the Sarasins varies from 1012 to 1502 c.c. with an average of 1278 c.c.: none of the three female Vedda skulls from the inner Vedda district have a capacity of less than 1150 c.c., though there is a skull of an adult Vedda woman in the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons with a capacity of only 960 c.c.

Summing up the physical characters to which we have briefly referred we may define the Veddas as a short, wavy-haired, dolichocephalic race, with moderately long faces and moderately broad noses. Expressing the results of measurements taken by the Sarasins we may say that chamaeprosopes, and leptoprosopes occur in about equal numbers, and that the Veddas are mesorrhine or present a low grade of platyrrhiny.

The latest Vedda literature of any importance is a volume published by the Sarasins which records the work they did in Ceylon during 1907 when they established the existence of a stone age upon the island. This fact had not been realised before, though two naturalists, Mr E. E. Green and Mr J. Pole both old residents, had already collected and recognised as artifacts the quartz implements which were the typical product of the stone age in Ceylon, and which, as pointed out by the Sarasins, are most reasonably to be attributed to the Veddas. A number of rock shelters were explored; these were situated at Kataragam in the south of the island where no Veddas now exist, and in other parts of Uva, in the present Vedda country

[erratum, see p. xx. – Analyst]

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5



a surplus to barter with the Moormen on their annual visit, or to take into the nearest Sinhalese village to exchange for iron, cloth, pots and occasional rice and coconuts.

Plate XIII represents the women of this group, the plates on which the men were photographed were accidentally destroyed shortly after we left Sitala Wanniya. Handuna whose height was 1·530 mm. (60¼ inches) looked a typical Vedda; Vela who was two inches taller also had a Vedda physiognomy though his appearance was not so typical; Kaira and Pema both looked as though they were of mixed blood, and Nila, height 1·555 mm. (61¼ inches), shown in Plate LV, would certainly not be taken for a Vedda at all.

Neither the assurance of a regular supply of food, nor the apathy produced by gradual starvation, had caused them to neglect their old ceremonies, and we found that once these people had overcome their shyness they were communicative, extremely courteous and merry. When the men understood that areca nut and betel leaves were always ready for them, they granted us the same freedom of their own cave, only stipulating that we should never allow our servants to go near it.

When they first led us to their cave we noticed that they stopped and shouted when about a quarter of a mile distant and did not proceed until an answering shout was heard. This they said was their custom and was equally observed whether they were accompanied by strangers or not. The place at which they stopped was their usual dancing ground as well as the spot on which pedlars were received and barter carried on, for strangers were never allowed to approach their caves or see their women.

Galmede. A family of Veddas of the Galmede group, seen at Godatalawa, consisted of ten persons who had left their old home in the Nuwaragala Hills, and who appeared to be moderately pure-blooded. The old man of the community proved a good informant, remembering a considerable number of old customs and invocations, but he was not a shaman, and as there was not one in the community most of the customs had fallen into desuetude. The members of this community were living on a very poor chena and, when we saw them, were in great difficulties as

[erratum; see p. xx. - Ananlyst]

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5



points were left doubtful. The extent of their neighbours' influence upon this community may be gauged to a certain degree by the following fact. When visiting the shaman we asked him to show us his *aude* and other sacred objects (as will be seen later, certain beads are held sacred in this community), he replied that he did not keep them at his own hut because of the noxious influence due to the presence of the women[1], but that the Sinhalese *gamarale*[2] took charge of them for him. We then went together to the house of the *gamarale*; this consisted of a hut divided by a partition at the back, one room being the sleeping room and the other the granary, and a large open barn in front, with its roof continuous with that of the hut. In the part of the barn nearest the rooms, the women of the household were cooking and pounding rice, while the back was railed off to form a byre in which a number of calves were tethered and into which the cows were driven at night. When it was pointed out that there were also women living in this house the shaman explained that their influence was counter-balanced by the presence of the cows. Physically some of the Unuwatura Bubula Veddas must be regarded as tolerably pure-blooded, since they included some of the shortest men we met. One man measured only about 1360 millimetres (53½ inches), but probably he is to be regarded as almost a dwarf.

## Village Veddas.

The village Veddas form a class which it is most difficult to describe briefly, yet fairly. The term must not be taken to apply to degenerate Veddas who have lost their jungle characteristics and independent habits under Sinhalese encroachment. Doubtless many such folk do live as Sinhalese in chena settlements for a short time before their extinction in the surrounding mass of peasant Sinhalese. But this is not the sense in which the Sinhalese apply the term Gan Veddo (village Veddas), nor is it the sense in which we use the term. Knox speaks of "wild"

[1] We afterwards ascertained that *hiti* was the name for the ceremonial uncleanliness of women.

[2] The *gamarale* of a Sinhalese village is the headman, who is responsible for the cultivation of the village lands and generally directs the agricultural affairs of the community.

2: Bailey G-5 (ca. 1854) 1863
AX5 Vedda AX5



I shall say nothing, for they have long associated, although they have not yet intermarried, with the neighbouring Singhalese. The former resemble those of Nilgala. If they are less wild, it is but a shade less wild, almost too slight to be called more civilized. They, in like manner, are distributed in small tribes or families. They live in huts formed of boughs and bark, not so much from any advance in civilization, as from the dearth of rock caves, which abound in Nilgala; but they, too, become Troglodytes in wet weather. They cultivate small patches of chena,* but their chief source of livelihood is the produce of the chase, and honey; and they move about from forest to forest, guided by the blossoming of the flowers, in search of bees and game. Their number in 1856 was 364, but some of these even were much more wild than others.

Both Nilgala and Bintenne Veddahs regard, for each tribe, particular tracts of country as their own, and are, as Knox tells us, careful not to trespass over each other's bounds, and they observe the custom, still prevalent among Kandyans, which entitles the lord of the soil to a portion of the game killed upon it.†

In my description of the wild Veddahs of Nilgala, and those of Bintenne, it is well to bear in mind that, though they are not fifty miles apart, there is no communication whatever between them. No individual Veddah of the one district ever saw one of the other. They are entirely distinct; but distinct only in geographical position. They have inherited the same customs, superstitions, names, and dialect.‡

In appearance, the Veddahs differ materially from the Singhalese. They are smaller in every respect, and rather darker, or, more properly, more dusky in complexion. They are short, slightly built, yet very active. Though far from being muscular, their limbs are firmly knit together, and they are athletic and capable of enduring great fatigue. Though spare, they are generally in very fair condition, and look more healthy than many of the Singhalese in the adjoining districts.§

The tallest Veddah I ever saw, a man so towering above his

* A "chéna" is a patch of ground cleared from the forest for cultivation. The jungle is burnt down, a crop taken off, and then suffered to grow up again. It is recleared again after intervals of from five to ten years.

† This custom is called gang-gâté, lit. village hind leg; "gama" would be better translated "township", as it signifies a tract of ground within certain limits. The lord of the soil claims the "hind leg" of any deer, etc., killed within his bounds.

‡ The Veddahs of the Badulla Bintenne appear a distinct sept; those of Nilgala are connected with a Veddah family living just across the Batticaloa boundary, close to which their country lies.

§ I use the term "Singhalese" and "Kandyan" in distinction from "Veddah."

2;Bailey G-5 (ca. 1854) 1863
AX5 Vedda AX5



follows, that, till I measured him, I believed him to be not merely comparatively a tall man, was only five feet three inches in height. He was a Veddah of Bintenne, and much more civilized in his life than the rest of the wild tribes there. The shortest man I have measured was four feet one inch. I should say that of men, the ordinary height is from four feet six to five feet one inch, and of women from four feet four to four feet eight inches.*

Their features are tolerably regular. The eyes are good, and often full. The nose is generally well shaped, though inclining to be flat; the nostrils wide. The mouth sometimes large, and the lips firm, but rather thick. The beard is short and scant. The hair of the head which is not curly falls in rusty, tangled masses about the face, making the head appear out of all proportion to the lean body, and this leads those who are not close observers to describe the Veddahs as large-headed. Tennent notices this and remarks how perfectly the description of the Besedæ, in the tract *De moribus Brachmanorum*, applies to the Veddahs of the present day. "Pigmies" indeed they are, "stunted and with unshorn dishevelled locks"—but the term *μεγαλακέφαλα* is not appropriate to them; for in point of fact, their heads are remarkably small.† One of their skulls, sent to England by me some years ago, through my friend Mr. Thwaites, the able Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens of Ceylon, to be submitted to the Society, was pronounced to be, in general capacity, smaller than the smallest negro, native Australian, or Esquimaux.‡ But their wild shaggy hair gives such an appearance of undue size to the head that it might well mislead the travellers from Thebes in the fifth and Tennent in the nineteenth century.

When quite in repose, the features of the Veddahs wear a vacant and melancholy expression, which is almost painful to look upon. In speaking to them, I have observed, in some, considerable shrewd-

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* In a list of heights of Veddahs taken lately at my request, I find two Veddahs measuring five feet three inches, and one five feet three inches and four-tenths; but, if these measurements are perfectly accurate, this is much above the average height. Of fourteen Veddahs of Bintenne, lately measured for me, the tallest was five feet three inches and four-tenths, the shortest four feet six inches and a quarter; the average five feet and half an inch. Of twelve women, the tallest was five feet two inches and a half, the shortest four feet four inches and a half; the average four feet nine inches.

† *Vide* the whole passage quoted by Tennent, vol. ii, part ix, chap. iii, note at page 439, 2nd edition, but especially the following: "*εἰσὶ δὲ καὶ οἱ Βεδδεῖς ἀνθρωπάρια, σκελαβᾶ, μεγαλακέφαλα, βλαισρὰ, καὶ ἀνιλότριχα.*"

‡ It was considered to be that of a female between twenty-two and twenty-eight years of age. The skull came from Nilgala, and was the smallest skull ever measured by Mr. Busk.

131 eastern part of that island in separate hordes and families. Nowadays, these Veddas can only be found in the plains of East Ceylon which territory is bordered in the south by the Arukan Aru River; it is commonly called "Mahaweddarata" meaning "Great Vedda Land." This name, however, has at present very little meaning because one can hardly find any real Veddas in that part of the country [144] but rather a population having more Singhalese than Vedda blood in their veins.

177 The Veddas of our times have for the greater part adopted the culture of the higher civilized population of the island of Ceylon. Really primitive Veddas hardly exist any more.

141 131 The Sarasins describe the Vedda people as one of short stature; for the Veddas of the central districts they found an average height of 155.4 centimeters, for the tribes of the east coast one of 155.8 centimeters, and for the Veddas of the Wewatte territory one of 160.7 centimeters. However, 144 144 if from the number of Veddas of the central districts those individuals are eliminated which show signs of interbreeding with other elements or can be regarded as such, then one will find a much shorter stature for those Veddas who seem to be of purer race; their average male's height is 153.3 centimeters, /108/ with a minimum of 146.0 centimeters and a maximum of 160.0 centimeters. On the average, the women are about 10 centimeters shorter than the males.

Characteristic physical features of the Veddas are:

Vedda AX5
Greater India AQ1

Characteristic physical features of the Veddas are: V 142
relatively very long and also thin arms, whereas their lower extremities are also fairly long. The color of their skin varies between brown and dark brown; the women are generally of a lighter color than the men. Their eyes are dark brown or black-brown; their hair is wavy, dark and coarse. Their beard growth is not heavy; it consists of wavy hair. The hair growth on the body is very sparse. Furthermore, they have a very long head with sometimes very marked supraorbital ridges. However, their face is broad and not very long, becoming suddenly very pointed toward the chin. Their flat nose bridge lies deep and recedes sharply under the forehead; the nose is fairly flat with broad nares. The lips are sometimes fairly thick, in other cases fairly thin. The mouth is not extremely wide and the jaw does not protrude (orthognathism).

They found that the capacity of the skull was very small. The cephalic index for the male skull was calculated to be 71.6 and 71.2 for the female skull. /109/ Therefore, the Veddas are to be considered a dolichocephalic people. (Figs. 14,15,16,17) V 141

According to Sarasin, it can be considered certain that there are peoples in India who are related to the Veddas of Ceylon. All these tribes can be considered to be remnants of a very old racial stratum which probably lived all over India in much earlier times. One should not identify them with the Dravidian population since they seem to represent the remnants of a pre-Dravidian population. V GI 144

Toala OG10
Vedda AX5
Mari-Leki OG7

The following table should prove that the body height of these tribes shows a great similarity to that of the Veddas: T V M IIH

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 71 | Vedda men | body height | 157.6 | centimeters |
| 11 | Toala " | " | 157.55 | " |
| 4 | Tomuna " | " | 157.6 | " |
| 10 | Tokea " | " | 157.0 | " |
| 28 | Vedda women | " | 147.3 | " |
| 8 | Toala " | " | 147.7 | " |

T V 142

Although the skin color of the Toala tribes is somewhat lighter than that of the Veddas, it is indeed darker than of the surrounding peoples in Celebes, such as the Toradja and the Buginese. Furthermore, both the Vedda and the Toala have wavy hair; they have the same beard growth, nearly the same form of the face, the same shape of the nose /116/ and the same everted lips (Fig. 18).

T V [141]

Yet, there are also various differences between the Toala tribes and the Veddas. First of all, as already mentioned, there is the difference of head shape; the Veddas being dolichocephalic, whereas the Toala's skull structure lies between mesocephaly and brachycephaly. However, Sarasin does not believe that this discrepancy is of much importance, since the Veddas themselves show a great variety of skull structures while, among them too, mesocephaly was found to be not infrequent. This could perhaps be attributed to a free variability which would rather be the case with the Toala, who have been separated from the Veddas by such

18: Kleiweg de Zwaan E-5 (1906-1910) 1925 OB1 Indonesia
Sakai AN6
Vedda AX5




Fig. 24. Diagram of Proportions (body height = 100). Of a Senoi man (a), of a Senoi woman (b), and of a Vedda man (c).

Depiction by R. Martin.